

REMARKS

Reconsideration is requested for claims 1-14 and 16-21, claim 15 having been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

The Abstract of the Disclosure was objected to. A new Abstract of the Disclosure accompanies the present Amendment on a separate sheet. Withdrawal of the objection is cordially urged.

Section headings have been added to the disclosure.

Claims 1-4, 6-11, 15, 16, 19, and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Those claims have been amended to address the grounds for rejection, and all of the claims have been amended to address minor matters of form and to conform generally with U.S. practice. Withdrawal of the rejection is cordially urged.

Claims 1-4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 15, 16, 19, and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,843,524 to *Krent et al.* Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 11, namely, that the portion, projecting from the sheet-like device, of the at least one light-emitting member is enclosed in a casing which is fixed to the device and which is made of a transparent material, and the casing is coated with a diffusion layer for spreading and leveling the incident light over an entire light-absorbing surface of the at least one light-emitting member. Claims 10 and 11 have been amended to depend from new independent claim 8. It is asserted in the Official Action that the sidewalls 21 in *Krent et al.* are considered to correspond to a casing. It is asserted that the transparent portions 12 include fluorescent material which diffuses the

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light. However, claim 1, as amended, recites that the casing is coated with a diffusion layer. The transparent portions 12 do not correspond to a casing.

In view of the differences between claim 1 and *Krent et al.*, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 and the claims depending therefrom, claims 2-7, 9, 12-14 and 16-20, are not anticipated by *Krent et al.*

Claims 1-4, 6, 7, 8, 15, 16, 19, and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,398,170 to *Lee*. As noted above, claim 1, from which claims 2-7 and 12-14 and 16-20 depend, has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 11 which is not and was not alleged to be anticipated by *Lee*.

New independent claim 8 recites a combination of features wherein the length between the ends of the at least one light-emitting member increases from an upper portion of the at least one light-emitting member in a mounted state of the sign unit towards a lower portion of the at least one light-emitting member. The claimed combination of features offers advantages including facilitating use of incident light such as sunlight that falls on the member obliquely from above.

Lee is only seen to disclose structures that vary in thickness and discloses nothing concerning any variance in length between ends of a light-emitting member. Accordingly, *Lee* does not anticipate claim 8.

Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Krent et al.* in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,251,392 to *McManigal* or U.S. Patent No. 4,059,916 to *Tachihara et al.*

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Krent et al. does not disclose a light-emitting member that varies in length between its ends. *McManigal* and *Tachihara et al.* only disclose structures that vary in thickness and disclose nothing concerning any variance in length between ends of a light-emitting member.

In view of the differences between claim 8 and *Krent et al.* in view of *McManigal* or *Tachihara et al.*, and further in view of the advantages available through the claimed combination, it is respectfully submitted that claim 8 defines patentably over the cited references.

Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Krent et al.* in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,903,172 to *Schoniger et al.* Claim 9 recites a combination of features including the at least one light-emitting member having edge sides not intended to emit light that prevent emissions. *Schoniger et al.* does not cure the defects of *Krent et al.* with respect to claim 1, from which claim 9 depends, and therefore claim 1 and the claims dependent therefrom, including claim 9, defines patentably over *Krent et al.* in view of *Schoniger et al.*

It is respectfully submitted that all of the pending claims, claims 1-14 and 16-20, are in condition for allowance. Allowance is cordially urged.

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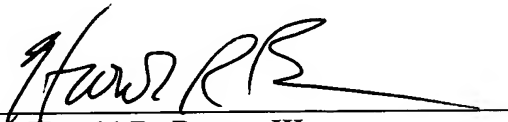
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If the Examiner is of the opinion that a telephone conference would be helpful in resolving any outstanding issues, the Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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